GERMAN WHITE BOOK ON ARMED MERCHANTMEN

WITH FACSIMILES OF THE SECRET ORDERS OF THE BRITISH ADMIRALTY

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BRITISH ADMIRALTY

MEMORANDUM

OF THE

Imperial German Government on the Treatment of Armed Merchantmen.

I

1. Even before the outbreak of the present war the British Government had given British shipping companies the opportunity to arm their merchant vessels with guns. On March 26, 1913, Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, made the declaration in the British Parliament (Exhibit 1), that the Admiralty had called upon the shipowners to arm a number of first-class liners for protection against danger threatening in certain cases from fast auxiliary cruisers of other Powers; the liners were not, however, to assume the character of auxiliary cruisers themselves. The Government desired to place at the disposal of the shipowners the necessary guns, sufficient ammunition, and suitable personnel for the training of the gun crews.

2. The English shipowners readily responded to the call of the Admiralty. Thus, Sir Owen Philipps, president of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, was able to inform the stockholders of his company in May, 1913, that the large steamers of the company were equipped with guns; furthermore, the British Admiralty published in January, 1914, a list according to which twenty-nine steamers of various British lines carried guns aft.

3. As a matter of fact, German cruisers ascertained soon after the outbreak of the war that British liners were armed; for example, the steamer "La Correntina," of the Houlder Line of Liverpool, which was captured by the German auxiliary cruiser "Kronprinz

Friedrich Wilhelm" on October 7, 1914, had two 4.7-inch guns aft. On February 1, 1915, a German submarine was shelled in the Channel by an English yacht.

II

1. With regard to the legal character of armed merchantmen in international law, the British Government took the position in respect of its own merchantmen that such vessels retain the character of peaceable merchant vessels as long as they carry the arms for defensive purposes only. In accordance with this, the British Ambassador at Washington, in a note dated August 25, 1914 (Exhibit 2), gave the American Government the fullest assurances that British merchant vessels were never armed for purposes of attack, but solely for defence, and that they consequently never fired unless first fired upon. On the other hand, the British Government set up the principle for armed vessels of other flags that they are to be treated as war vessels. No. 1 of Order 1 of the prize court rules, promulgated by the Order in Council of August 5, 1914, expressly provides "ship of war shall include armed ship."

2. The German Government has no doubt that a merchantman assumes a warlike character by armament with guns, regardless of whether the guns are intended to serve only for defence or also for attack. It considers any warlike activity of an enemy merchantman contrary to international law, although it accords consideration to the opposite view by treating the crew of such a vessel not as pirates but as belligerents. The details of its position are set forth in the memorandum on the treatment of armed merchantmen in neutral ports (Exhibit 3), communicated to the American Government in October, 1914, and the contents of which were likewise communicated to other neutral Powers.

3. Some of the neutral Powers have accepted the position of the British Government, and, therefore, permitted armed merchantmen of the belligerent Powers to stay in their ports and on their roadsteads without the restrictions which they had imposed on ships of war through their neutrality regulations. Some, however, have taken the contrary view and subjected armed merchantmen of belligerents to the neutrality rules applicable to ships of war.

III

1. During the course of the war the armament of British merchantmen has been more and more generally carried out. From reports of the German naval forces numerous cases became known in which British merchantmen not only offered armed resistance to the German war vessels, but proceeded to attack them on their own initiative, and in so doing they frequently even made use of false flags. A list of such cases is found in Exhibit 4, which, from the nature of the matter, can include only a part of the attacks which were actually made. It can also be seen from this list that the practice described is not limited to British merchantmen, but is imitated by the merchantmen of England's allies.

2. The explanation of the action of the armed British merchantmen described is contained in Exhibits 5 to 12, which are photographic reproductions of secret instructions of the British Admiralty found by German naval forces on captured ships. These instructions regulate in detail artillery attack by British merchantmen on German submarines. They contain exact regulations touching the reception, treatment, activity, and control of the British gun crews taken on board merchantmen; for example, the crews are not to wear uniform in neutral ports, and thus plainly belong to the British Navy. Above all, it is shown by the instructions that these armed vessels are not to await any action of maritime war on the part of the German submarines, but are to attack them forthwith. In this respect the following regulations are particularly instructive:

a. The "Instructions for Guidance in the Use, Care and Maintenance of Armament in Defensively Armed Merchant Ships" (Exhibits 5 and 6) provide in the section headed "Action" in No. 4: "It is not advisable to open fire at a range greater than 800 yards, unless the enemy has already opened fire." From this it is the duty of the merchantmen in principle to open fire without regard to the attitude of the submarine.

b. The "Instructions Regarding Submarines Applicable to Vessels Carrying a Defensive Armament" (Exhibits 9 and 10) prescribe under No. 3: "If a submarine is obviously pursuing a ship, by day, and it is evident to the Master that she has hostile inten-

tions, the ship pursued should open fire in self-defence, notwithstanding the submarine may not have committed a definite hostile act, such as firing a gun or torpedo." From this also the mere appearance of a submarine in the wake of a merchantman affords sufficient occasion for an armed attack.

In all these orders, which do not apply merely to the zone of maritime war around England, but are unrestricted in their applicability (for the Mediterranean, see Exhibit 12), the greatest emphasis is laid on secrecy, plainly in order that the action of merchantmen, which is in contradiction of international law and of the British assurances (Exhibit 2), might remain concealed from the enemy as well as the neutrals.

3. It is thus made plain that the armed British merchantmen have official orders to attack the German submarines treacherously wherever they come near them; that is to say, orders to conduct relentless warfare against them. Since England's rules of maritime war are adopted by her allies without question, the proof must be taken as valid in respect of the armed merchantmen of the other enemy countries also.

IV

1. In the circumstances set forth above enemy merchantmen armed with guns no longer have any right to be considered as peaceable merchantmen. Therefore the German naval forces will receive orders within a short period, paying consideration to the interests of the neutrals, to treat such vessels as belligerents.

2. The German Government brings this state of affairs to the knowledge of the neutral Powers in order that they may warn their nationals against continuing to entrust their persons or property to armed merchantmen of the Powers at war with the German Empire.

Berlin, February 8, 1916.

Exhibits

Exhibit 1.

Declaration of the First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill, in the House of Commons, March 26, 1913.

(Parliamentary Debates, Official Report, 3rd Session of the 30th Parliament, House of Commons, 1913, vol. 1, pp. 1776 and 1777.)

I turn to one aspect of trade protection which requires special reference. It was made clear at the second Hague Conference and the London Conference, that certain of the Great Powers have reserved to themselves the right to convert merchant-steamers into cruisers, not merely in national harbors, but if necessary on the high seas. There is now good reason to believe that a considerable number of foreign merchant-steamers may be rapidly converted into armed ships by the mounting of guns. The seaborne trade of the world follows well-marked routes, upon nearly all of which the tonnage of the British mercantile marine largely predominates. Our food-carrying liners and vessels carrying raw material following these trade routes would in certain contingencies meet foreign vessels armed and equipped in the manner described. If the British ships had no armament, they would be at the mercy of any foreign liner carrying one effective gun and a few rounds of ammunition. It would be obviously absurd to meet the contingency of considerable numbers of foreign armed merchant-cruisers on the high seas by building an equal number of cruisers. That would expose this country to an expenditure of money, to meet a particular danger, altogether disproportionate to the expense caused to any foreign Power in creating that danger. Hostile cruisers, wherever they are found, will be covered and met by British ships of war, but the proper reply to an armed merchantman is another merchantman armed in her own defence.

This is the position to which the Admiralty have felt it necessary to draw the attention of leading shipowners. We have felt

justified in pointing out to them the danger to life and property which would be incurred if their vessels were totally incapable of offering any defence to an attack. The shipowners have responded to the Admiralty invitation with cordiality, and substantial progress has been made in the direction of meeting it by preparing as a defensive measure to equip a number of first-class British liners to repel the attack of armed foreign merchant-cruisers. Although these vessels have, of course, a wholly different status from that of the regularly commissioned merchant-cruisers, such as those we obtain under the Cunard agreement, the Admiralty have felt that the greater part of the cost of the necessary equipment should not fall upon the owners, and we have decided, therefore, to lend the necessary guns, to supply ammunition, and to provide for the training of members of the ship's company to form the guns' crews. The owners on their part are paying the cost of the necessary structural conversion, which is not great. The British mercantile marine will, of course, have the protection of the Royal Navy under all possible circumstances, but it is obviously impossible to guarantee individual vessels from attack when they are scattered on their voyages all over the world. No one can pretend to view these measures without regret, or without hoping that the period of retrogression all over the world which has rendered them necessary may be succeeded by days of broader international confidence and agreement than those through which we are now passing.

Exhibit 2.

Abstract from the Official Publication of the State Department of the United States of America.

"European War No. 2, Diplomatic Correspondence with Belligerent Governments relating to Neutral Rights and Duties," p. 41.

The British Ambassador to the Secretary of State

No. 289. British Embassy,
Washington, August 25, 1914.

Sir: With reference to Mr. Barclay's notes Nos. 252 and 259 of the 4th and 9th of August, respectively, fully explaining the position taken up by His Majesty's Government in regard to the question of armed merchantmen, I have the honour, in view of the fact that a number of British armed merchantmen will now be visiting United States ports, to reiterate that the arming of British merchantmen is solely a precautionary measure adopted for the purpose of defence against attack from hostile craft.

I have at the same time been instructed by His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to give the United States Government the fullest assurances that British merchant-vessels will never be used for purposes of attack, that they are merely peaceful traders armed only for defence, that they will never fire unless first fired upon, and that they will never under any circumstances attack any vessel.

I have, etc.

CECIL SPRING-RICE.

Exhibit 3.

Promemoria of the German Government on the Treatment of Armed Merchantmen in Neutral Ports of October 13, 1914.

According to an official announcement of the "Westminster Gazette" of September 21, 1914, the State Department in Washington has decreed that ships of a belligerent Power, provided with armament and ammunition are nevertheless in American ports to be treated as merchantmen in so far as the armament is to serve exclusively for purposes of defence. This decree does not take the principles of neutrality sufficiently into consideration.

The purpose of the artilleristic armament of the British merchantmen is armed resistance against the German cruisers. Such a resistance is contrary to international law, because a merchantman is not permitted military defence against a man-of-war; such action would entitle the man-of-war to sink the merchantman with her crew and passengers. It is open to doubt whether ships armed in this manner may be received at all in the ports of a neutral State. At any rate, such ships cannot enjoy in neutral ports any better treatment than genuine men-of-war intended for the legitimate prosecution of war; hence they would at least be subject to the rules which the neutral State has issued in restriction of the stay of the men-of-war of belligerent States.

If the American Government believes it is fulfilling its duty of neutrality by confining admission of armed merchantmen to ships exclusively equipped for defence, it must be pointed out that in order to establish the warlike character of a ship the distinction between arms of attack and arms of defence is of no moment; what is decisive is rather the question whether the ship is intended for any warlike activity whatever. Moreover, limitations in the extent of the armament offer no guarantee that ships armed in that manner will not in a given case be used for purposes of attack.

Exhibit 4.

LIST OF CASES

in which enemy merchantmen have fired on German or Austro-Hungarian submarines.

Date	Place	Nationality and Name of Ship	Details Concerning the Circumstances
1915			
Apr. 11	South North Sea near Nordhinder Lightship	Unknown Steamer	Steamer without flag. Steamer saw periscope, opened gun-fire at about 3000 meters and turned toward U . . . Explosion of shells could be heard near the submarine (about 15 to 20 shots).
Apr. 28	North Sea, about 60 sea-miles northeast of mouth of Tyne	Unknown Steamer of medium size	Steamer was sighted coming toward submarine, suddenly opened fire at about 3000 meters without hoisting flag. On account of her head-on position it could not be seen whether she bore neutral marks. From the impact of the projectiles the guns were from 5 to 7 centimeters. U . . . escaped the well-directed fire by speedily submerging.
May 29	West entrance to the English Channel near Ouessant	British Steamer "Demerara"	U . . . chased the steamer and tried when 4500 meters off to stop her by warning shots. Steamer turned off and answered the fire.
June 3	West entrance to the English Channel, 50 sea-miles south of the Scilly Isles	Unknown Steamer	U . . . tried to stop steamer after warning shot by fire from her guns. Steamer returned the fire with a poop gun.

Date	Place	Nationality and Name of Ship	Details Concerning the Circumstances
1915			
June 14	West of the Hebrides (about 30 sea-miles off Lewis)	Two Unknown Steamers	The two steamers were running close together. When at a distance of about 4000 meters both opened fire on U . . . with small calibre poop guns. Shots fell badly sideways. Submarine submerged, ran deep since submarine attack hopeless.
Aug. 14	Irish Sea	Large British Steamer of Royal Mail Line	U . . . was suddenly fired on by steamer without any provocation. Shots fell short. No attack had been attempted on steamer.
Aug. 18	Bristol Channel	Unknown Steamer	Tried after warning to stop steamer by gun-fire. When latter saw that U-boat waited, she suddenly fired from a gun on her promenade deck.
Sept. 10	West Mediterranean	Unknown Steamer	Steamer was called upon to show her flag. She turned off without hoisting flag and opened fire from a poop gun of about 10 centimeters. The U-boat escaped fire, speedily submerging.
Oct. 7	Middle Mediterranean	French Steamer "Amiral Hamelin"	U . . . stopped steamer by signal. She turned and ran away in a zigzag course. The U-boat tried to stop her by gun-fire. Steamer at 3000 meters' distance replied to fire. Steamer stopped only after some time and was sunk later.

Date	Place	Nationality and Name of Ship	Details Concerning the Circumstances
1915			
Nov. 3	Western Mediterranean	British Transport Steamer "Woodfield"	Steamer did not stop after warning shot. At 6000 meters replied to fire with small calibre gun. Compelled to stop by gun-fire and sunk later. Her crew list showed that she had a gun captain and a gun crew from the navy among her crew.
Nov. 5	Western Mediterranean	Unknown Steamer	The large steamer was chased by U . . . after fruitless warning. She returned fire with a large calibre gun. Chase had to be abandoned.
Nov. 6	Eastern Mediterranean	British Tank Steamer "Lumina"	Steamer was summoned to stop by warning shot. Turned off, ran away and returned fire with a poop gun. Was stopped by gun-fire and sunk later.
Nov. 23	Western Mediterranean	British Steamer "City of Marseilles"	U . . . tried after warning shot to stop large freight steamer by artillery fire. Steamer turned off and replied to fire with two guns of 10 centimeters calibre. The U-boat had to abandon chase, because steamer escaped. A newspaper telegram from Bombay of January 1, 1916, confirmed the incident in detail; steamer told she had sunk the U-boat.
Nov. 30	Middle Mediterranean	Unknown Steamer	U . . . after warning shot tried to stop a large steamer without flag by gun-fire. Steamer turned and replied to fire by a small calibre gun.
Dec. 8	Eastern Mediterranean	Unknown Steamer	Steamer was approached under water. She fired from a poop gun at the periscope as soon as it emerged.

Date	Place	Nationality and Name of Ship	Details Concerning the Circumstances
1915			
Dec. 13	Middle Mediterranean	Unknown British Steamer	U . . . tried to stop a large steamer with poop guns, carrying no flag, by artillery-fire. Steamer hoisted British flag and replied to fire from two guns.
Dec. 14	Middle Mediterranean	Unknown Steamer	U . . . approached steamer, which stopped when sighting U-boat, and ordered her to show her flag. Steamer ran away at top-speed, keeping up a brisk fire from a poop gun.
Jan. 17	Middle Mediterranean	Unknown Steamer	U . . . ordered a steamer, apparently in ballast, sighted on a westerly course to stop. Steamer turned off, ran away and fired from a poop gun.
Jan. 17	Middle Mediterranean	British Steamer "Melanie"	U . . . signaled a flush-decked freight steamer of about 3000 tons, sailing under the Dutch flag, to send a boat in order that the ship's papers might be examined. This was done after a while. When U . . ., which had submerged for safety's sake emerged about 1000 meters from the steamer near the ship's boat, the steamer opened a violent fire from two guns of medium calibre and from machine guns, U . . . barely succeeding to save herself by quickly submerging. Throughout the action the steamer flew the Dutch flag; she bore the name of "Melanie," which is not found in the Dutch but in the British marine list.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR GUIDANCE IN THE USE, CARE, AND MAINTENANCE OF ARMAMENT IN DEFENSIVELY ARMED MERCHANT SHIPS.

General.

1. Ratings embarked as gun's crew will sign the ship's articles at the rate of pay communicated.

2. They are to obey the orders of the Master and Officers of the ship. If they think it necessary to make a complaint against any order they are to obey the order and make their complaint in writing, asking that it may be forwarded to the proper authorities.

3. The ratings are not required for duties unconnected with the armament except in case of emergency, but they are to assist at all times in the welfare of the ship and look after the cleanliness of their berths.

4. They are to keep watch and watch at sea, and also when the ship is anchored in any place liable to attack by submarines.

5. They will receive their pay through the Master of the ship. They will not mess with the crew, but in one of the Officers' messes as the Master may decide.

6. Uniform is not to be worn in neutral ports.

7. A brief report is to be rendered by the senior rating on the 1st of each month, countersigned by the Master, and sent to :—

The Director of Trade Division,
Admiralty, Whitehall, S.W.

Drill and Maintenance of Gun.

8. The ratings embarked are entirely responsible for the efficiency in all respects of the gun and ammunition, which should be ready day and night.

9. The senior rating is to arrange with the Master to detail the necessary additional men to complete the gun's crew up to the numbers required by the drill book.

10. One of the ratings is to act as gunlayer and the other as breech worker. The remaining numbers should be told off to act as sightsetter, projectile loader, and cartridge loader, &c.

11. Arrangements are to be made with the Master to detail a sufficient number of hands, over and above the gun's crew, to supply ammunition to the gun on going into action.

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12. A ready supply of 10 complete rounds, with percussion tubes in the cartridges, is to be kept at the gun day and night. Care should be taken that a supply of one percussion tube to each cartridge is kept aside for action, and this supply of tubes is never to be encroached on for practice firing.

13. The senior rating should arrange with the Master for the instruction of the ratings told off as gun's crew and ammunition supply party

14. A drill book is supplied for information, but it is not necessary that the gun's crew should be burdened with details, provided that they understand what is required when the gun is to be fought.

15. Percussion firing should always be used, as it is the most certain means of discharging the gun ; and therefore—

(*a*) Cartridges, in ready supply only, should be kept ready tubed with percussion tubes. Tubes not required for ready supply of cartridges should be retained in their sealed boxes to preserve them from damp.

(*b*) Aiming practice with a percussion lanyard should be carried out daily. It is not necessary to fire a tube in this practice, but the breechworker should be exercised at the same time in cocking the striker while the breech is open, and in hooking on the firing lanyard and passing it to the gunlayer

NOTE.—The present allowance of percussion tubes is one per cartridge. Electric firing mechanism and batteries are therefore to be kept efficient in every respect in case the supply of percussion tubes becomes insufficient, from damp or other causes.

16. Great attention is to be paid to the ready supply of ammunition, to keep it clean and dry If tubes and cartridges are not kept dry there is considerable danger of hanging fire. The projectiles are to be lightly oiled. In case the cartridges are suspected to have become wet, they should be laid aside until return to harbour

17 For the maintenance of the gun and mounting it is to be borne in mind that " lubrication is the secret of efficiency in gun machinery." All oil channels should be seen clear of vaseline and filled with oil. It is to be remembered that vaseline is a preservative only , oil is a lubricant.

Each morning and evening the bore is to seen clear, recoil cylinders filled, striker protrusion gauged, and the gun trained and elevated to both extremes.

The gun is to be cleaned twice a day, gear being supplied by the master

Brickdust is *not* to be used on machined surfaces.

Action.

The master is responsible for handling the ship and for opening and ceasing fire. He has been furnished with instructions which will enable him to do this to the best advantage. The duty of the gun's crew is to fight the gun under the general direction of the master, who will communicate to them so much of the instructions as he may consider necessary to enable them to fight the gun to the best advantage.

In action the following instructions should be carried out:—

(1) When in submarine waters, everything should be in a state of readiness, but the gun should not be kept actually loaded.

(2) When the enemy is engaged:—

(*a*) The point of aim should be the centre of the water line.

(*b*) It is to be remembered that "over" shots are useless. A short shot by causing a splash confuses the enemy. It may ricochet into the enemy. If the shell bursts on striking the water—as it usually does—some fragments are likely to hit the enemy. To get the best result, at least half of the shots fired should fall short.

(3) The master will probably keep the submarine astern so that little deflection will be necessary.

(4) It is not advisable to open fire at a range greater than 800 yards, unless the enemy has already opened fire, for the following reasons:—

(*a*) The ammunition supply is limited.

(*b*) Accurate shooting under probable existing conditions cannot be expected at greater ranges.

(5) When in action and a miss-fire occurs with a percussion tube, the following procedure is to be adopted:—

(*a*) The B.M. Lever is to be tapped to ensure it is closed.

(*b*) The striker is to be re-cocked.

If the gun does not then fire:—The striker is to be taken out to ensure that the point is not broken. If unbroken the breech is to be opened and the cartridge is to be thrown overboard, it having been ascertained that the percussion tube has been inserted.

The gun is then to be reloaded.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CARRYING OUT FIRING PRACTICE.

1. In order to ensure that the gun is maintained in an efficient condition, one round is to be fired every two months.

2. In order to prevent false alarms it is essential that the firing referred to in paragraph 1 shall take place in clear weather and out of sight of land *and of other ships.*

3. If convenient a cask or other suitable object should be dropped as a target, and the gun should be fired when the range is about 800 yards.

4. The gun's crew and ammunition supply party should be exercised on the day previous to the practice, and also immediately before firing.

5. Before practice firing the following procedure is to be carried out :—

(*a*) Recoil cylinders and tanks are to be seen filled.
(*b*) Bore is to be seen clear.
(*c*) Moveable objects in the way of blast from the gun are to be removed.
(*d*) The striker is to be examined to see—
(1) That sheath nut is screwed up and keep pin in place and intact.
(2) That needle set and check-nuts are screwed up.
(3) That striker does not protrude with B.M. lever in open position.
(4) That striker does not move forward till marks on breech block and gun are in line.
(5) That safety stop is correct and keep-screw is in place.

ADMIRALTY,
7 May 1915.

Confidential.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR GUIDANCE IN THE USE, CARE, AND MAINTENANCE OF ARMAMENT IN DEFENSIVELY ARMED MERCHANT SHIPS.

General.

Not applicable to ocean going vessels permanently armed

1. Ratings embarked as gun's crew will sign the ship's articles at the rate of pay communicated.

2. They are to obey the orders of the Master and Officers of the ship. If they think it necessary to make a complaint against any order they are to obey the order and make their complaint in writing, asking that it may be forwarded to the proper authorities.

3. The ratings are not required for duties unconnected with the armament except in case of emergency, but they are to assist at all times in the welfare of the ship and look after the cleanliness of their berths.

4. They are to keep watch and watch at sea, and also when the ship is anchored in any place liable to attack by submarines.

5. They will receive their pay through the Master of the ship. They will not mess with the crew, but [redacted] as the Master may decide.

6. Uniform is not to be worn in neutral ports.

7. A brief report is to be rendered by the senior rating on the 1st of each month, countersigned by the Master, and sent to :—

The Director of Trade Division,
Admiralty, Whitehall, S.W.

Drill and Maintenance of Gun.

8. The ratings embarked are entirely responsible for the efficiency in all respects of the gun and ammunition, which should be ready day and night.

9. The senior rating is to arrange with the Master to detail the necessary additional men to complete the gun's crew up to the numbers required by the drill book.

10. One of the ratings is to act as gunlayer and the other as breech worker. The remaining numbers should be told off to act as sightsetter, projectile loader, and cartridge loader, &c.

11. Arrangements are to be made with the Master to detail a sufficient number of hands, over and above the gun's crew, to supply ammunition to the gun on going into action.

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12. A ready supply of 10 complete rounds, with percussion tubes in the cartridges, is to be kept at the gun day and night. Care should be taken that a supply of one percussion tube to each cartridge is kept aside for action, and this supply of tubes is never to be encroached on for practice firing.

13. The senior rating should arrange with the Master for the instruction of the ratings told off as gun's crew and ammunition supply party.

14. A drill book is supplied for information, but it is not necessary that the gun's crew should be burdened with details, provided that they understand what is required when the gun is to be fought.

15. Percussion firing should always be used, as it is the most certain means of discharging the gun; and therefore—

(*a*) Cartridges, in ready supply only, should be kept ready tubed with percussion tubes. Tubes not required for ready supply of cartridges should be retained in their sealed boxes to preserve them from damp.

(*b*) Aiming practice with a percussion lanyard should be carried out daily. It is not necessary to fire a tube in this practice, but the breechworker should be exercised at the same time in cocking the striker while the breech is open, and in hooking on the firing lanyard and passing it to the gunlayer.

NOTE.—The present allowance of percussion tubes is one per cartridge. Electric firing mechanism and batteries are therefore to be kept efficient in every respect in case the supply of percussion tubes becomes insufficient, from damp or other causes.

16. Great attention is to be paid to the ready supply of ammunition, to keep it clean and dry. If tubes and cartridges are not kept dry there is considerable danger of hanging fire. The projectiles are to be lightly oiled. In case the cartridges are suspected to have become wet, they should be laid aside until return to harbour.

17. For the maintenance of the gun and mounting it is to be borne in mind that "lubrication is the secret of efficiency in gun machinery." All oil channels should be seen clear of vaseline and filled with oil. It is to be remembered that vaseline is a preservative only; oil is a lubricant.

Each morning and evening the bore is to seen clear, recoil cylinders filled, striker protrusion gauged, and the gun trained and elevated to both extremes.

The gun is to be cleaned twice a day, gear being supplied by the master.

Brickdust is *not* to be used on machined surfaces.

Action.

The master is responsible for handling the ship and for opening and ceasing fire. He has been furnished with instructions which will enable him to do this to the best advantage. The duty of the gun's crew is to fight the gun under the general direction of the master, who will communicate to them so much of the instructions as he may consider necessary to enable them to fight the gun to the best advantage.

In action the following instructions should be carried out:—

(1) When in submarine waters, everything should be in a state of readiness, but the gun should not be kept actually loaded.

(2) When the enemy is engaged:—

(*a*) The point of aim should be the centre of the water line.

(*b*) It is to be remembered that "over" shots are useless. A short shot by causing a splash confuses the enemy. It may ricochet into the enemy. If the shell bursts on striking the water—as it usually does—some fragments are likely to hit the enemy. To get the best result, at least half of the shots fired should fall short.

(3) The master will probably keep the submarine astern so that little deflection will be necessary.

(4) It is not advisable to open fire at a range greater than 800 yards, unless the enemy has already opened fire, for the following reasons:—

(*a*) The ammunition supply is limited.

(*b*) Accurate shooting under probable existing conditions cannot be expected at greater ranges.

(5) When in action and a miss-fire occurs with a percussion tube, the following procedure is to be adopted:—

(*a*) The B.M. Lever is to be tapped to ensure it is closed.

(*b*) The striker is to be re-cocked.

If the gun does not then fire:—The striker is to be taken out to ensure that the point is not broken. If unbroken the breech is to be opened and the cartridge is to be thrown overboard, it having been ascertained that the percussion tube has been inserted.

The gun is then to be reloaded.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CARRYING OUT FIRING PRACTICE.

1. In order to ensure that the gun is maintained in an efficient condition, one round is to be fired every two months.

2. In order to prevent false alarms it is essential that the firing referred to in paragraph 1 shall take place in clear weather and out of sight of land *and of other ships.*

3. If convenient a cask or other suitable object should be dropped as a target, and the gun should be fired when the range is about 800 yards.

4. The gun's crew and ammunition supply party should be exercised on the day previous to the practice, and also immediately before firing.

5. Before practice firing the following procedure is to be carried out :—

(*a*) Recoil cylinders and tanks are to be seen filled.

(*b*) Bore is to be seen clear.

(*c*) Moveable objects in the way of blast from the gun are to be removed.

(*d*) The striker is to be examined to see—

(1) That sheath net is screwed up and keep pin in place and intact.

(2) That needle set and check-nuts are screwed up.

(3) That striker does not protrude with B.M. lever in open position.

(4) That striker does not move forward till marks on breech block and gun are in line.

(5) That safety stop is correct and keep-screw is in place.

ADMIRALTY,
7 May 1915.

(6) In guns fitted with " A " breech mechanism, the mechanism is never to be taken apart.

Paragraphs (1), (2), and (5) do not apply, but the following should be seen to :—

(i) The nut retaining striker must be seen screwed up and keep-screw in place.

(ii) The needle retaining-nut should be seen screwed up taut

(33) AS 70 (28585) Pk 1251 300 5/15 E & S

Exhibit 7.

Confidential.

Addenda to:—

INSTRUCTIONS FOR GUIDANCE IN THE USE, CARE, AND MAINTENANCE OF ARMAMENT IN DEFENSIVELY ARMED MERCHANT SHIPS.

1. The Master should arrange wherever possible that the space in the immediate vicinity of the gun is railed off, and passengers and other unauthorised persons should not be allowed near the gun.

2. A notice to this effect should be posted up near the gun.

3. When the ship is in harbour, one of the two Ratings is always to be on board to keep guard on the gun and ammunition, and the Master is to use his discretion as to keeping both Ratings on board, should he consider such a course to be desirable.

4. The gun is to be kept covered at all times when not in use.

5. Whenever the ships anchor in the vicinity of a man-of-war, a request should be made to the Commanding Officer of the man-of-war for an armourer to inspect the gun and mounting.

ADMIRALTY,
27 May 1915.

o (33) AS 71 Pk 1256 1000 5/15 E & S

Exhibit 8.

DRILL BOOK

FOR

12-PR. Q.F. GUNS

ISSUED TO

DEFENSIVELY ARMED MERCHANT SHIPS.

ADMIRALTY,
GUNNERY BRANCH.
(G. 6118/15. MAY 1915.)

Note.—The contents of this White Book are only of military interest

No. 45

CONFIDENTIAL.

In no circumstances is this Paper to be allowed to fall into the hands of the Enemy.

This paper is for the Master's personal information. It is not to be copied, and when not actually in use is to be kept in safety in a place where it can be destroyed at a moment's notice.

Such portions as call for immediate action may be communicated verbally to the officers concerned.

25th February 1915.

INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING SUBMARINES APPLICABLE TO VESSELS CARRYING A DEFENSIVE ARMAMENT.

1. Defensively armed vessels should follow generally the instructions for ordinary merchant ships.

2. In submarine waters, guns should be kept in instant readiness.

3. If a submarine is obviously pursuing a ship, by day, and it is evident to the Master that she has hostile intentions, the ship pursued should open fire in self-defence, notwithstanding the submarine may not have committed a definite hostile act such as firing a gun or torpedo.

4. In view of the great difficulty in distinguishing a friend from an enemy at night, fire should not be opened after dark unless it is absolutely certain that the vessel fired at is hostile.

5. Before opening fire, the British Colours should be hoisted.

It is essential that fire should not be opened under Neutral Colours.

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0 (33)27231 Pk 250 2/15 E & S

Exhibit 10.

CONFIDENTIAL. No. 291

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Such portions as call for immediate action may be communicated verbally to the officers concerned.

April 1915.

INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING SUBMARINES APPLICABLE TO VESSELS CARRYING A DEFENSIVE ARMAMENT.

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1. Defensively armed vessels should follow generally the instructions for ordinary merchant ships.

2. In submarine waters guns should be kept in instant readiness.

3. If a submarine is obviously pursuing a ship, by day, and it is evident to the Master that she has hostile intentions, the ship pursued should open fire in self-defence, notwithstanding the submarine may not have committed a definite hostile act, such as firing a gun or torpedo.

4. In view of the great difficulty in distinguishing a friend from an enemy at night, fire should not be opened after dark unless it is absolutely certain that the vessel fired at is hostile.

5. Before opening fire, the British Colours must be hoisted.

It is essential that fire should not be opened under Neutral Colours.

6. If a defensively armed vessel is pursued by a submarine the Master has two alternatives:—

(*a*) To open fire at long range immediately it is certain that the submarine is really in pursuit.

(*b*) To retain fire until the submarine has closed to a range, say 800 yards, at which fire is likely to be effective.

In view of the very great difficulty of distinguishing between friendly and hostile submarines at long range (one British submarine has already been fired at by a merchant vessel which erroneously supposed herself to be pursued by the submarine), it is strongly recommended that course (*b*) should be adopted by all defensively armed ships.

7. A submarine's flag is no guide to her nationality, as German submarines frequently fly British Colours.

8. Vessels carrying a defensive armament and proceeding to neutral ports must not be painted in neutral colours or wear a neutral flag.

9. It is recommended that in neutral ports, particularly those of Spain, the armament should be concealed as far as possible. A canvas cover is recommended for this purpose.

O (33)28293—1 Pk 1173 500 4/15 E & S

SECRET.

MEMORANDUM FOR ISSUE TO MASTERS OF TRANSPORTS CARRYING TROOPS.

Use of Rifle and Machine Gun Fire by Troops on Board Transports against Enemy Submarines or Torpedo Craft.

(1) In daylight a submarine will probably attack while submerged with only her periscope showing.

At night, in moonlight, a submarine may attack while on the surface or with only her conning tower above water owing to the difficulty of seeing through the periscope at night.

(2) In either case heavy rifle or machine gun fire will make it more difficult for a submarine to make a successful shot with a torpedo. If submerged, no injury will be done to her, but a good volume of fire falling just short of the periscope will make splashes which will render it difficult for the observer to see clearly through the periscope.

(3) When a destroyer escort is accompanying a transport, troops should not open fire on a submarine, as it may prevent a destroyer from ramming her, nor should their weapons be loaded, in order to avoid the possibility of an escorting vessel being fired on by mistake, especially at night.

(4) When no escort is provided machine guns should be in readiness to open fire, and a strong party of riflemen should also be on duty.

(5) Military officers should be in command both of the machine guns and riflemen to control the fire.

(6) A military officer of the watch should be in command of the troops on deck. He should not order fire to be opened on a hostile submarine or torpedo vessel without the previous assent of the master or his representative—the ship's officer of the watch.

(7) The object of those controlling the fire should be to keep the centre of the pattern just short of the hostile vessel.

(8) Machine gun tripods can be lashed to the rails or other deck fittings. If there is motion on the ship and machine guns are fitted with elevating or training gear, it is advisable to disconnect it and point the gun by hand.

(9) Field guns with recoil mountings might possibly be secured on deck in such a manner as to permit of their being fired, but their arc of training would be very restricted, and it is unlikely that gunlayers, without previous training afloat, could make satisfactory practice from a ship with motion on. Their use is not, therefore, recommended.

(10) In men-of-war it has been the practice for very many years to station sentries with ball cartridge on deck opposite the boats in the event of fire, collision, or other serious emergency likely to lead to the boats being required. Their duties are to prevent anyone getting into the boats or attempting to lower the boats without orders from the Captain or his representative. This practice should be followed in Transports.

ADMIRALTY,
31st May 1915.

o (33) AS 88 Pk 1269 750 6/15 E & S

Exhibit 12.

ADMIRAL SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE.

MALTA,

JUNE 1915

Instructions to British Merchant Vessels passing through the Mediterranean Sea.

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It is now certain that there are enemies Submarines at sea in the Mediterranean.

In order to avoid attack you are to keep out of the track of shipping.

You are to darken ship at night and are not to show navigation lights except at discretion to avoid collision and all lights are to be extinguished when necessity is passed.

You are to carry out the procedure recommended by the Admiralty in their printed instructions if a hostile Submarine is sighted.

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